

**MINUTES OF WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC HEARING
AUGUST 18, 2015 LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
Ordinance Clarifying the Applicability of Pedal Cab Requirements**

President Slifka called the Hearing to order at 5:50 p.m.

President Slifka: Sorry guys. We will call the 5:50 Public Hearing to Order. This is an ordinance clarifying the applicability of pedal cab requirements, and we'll start with a roll call please, Ms. Labrot?

Present were Councilors Chris Barnes, Shari Cantor, Harry Captain, Judy Casperson, Leon Davidoff, Burke Doar, Denise Hall, Clare Kindall, and Scott Slifka.

President Slifka: Thank you. And my apologies to my colleagues and everybody here for the late start. We'll start with the presentation of the administration. Mr. Alair?

Mr. Alair: Good evening. Back in 2008, the Town of West Hartford had a brief flirtation with commercial pedal cab operators, and some of you may recall that we adopted an ordinance at that time regulating those operators. We were dealing with two operators at that time, one of whom had a business model which was along the lines of I'm gonna put ads on my pedal cabs and if people ride in them, they'll just give me whatever donation they choose. So we had to be quite broad when we defined what a commercial pedal cab was, and unfortunately the pedal cab operators disappeared rather quickly, but now we find ourselves some years later with a group of folks, one of whom is here tonight, Lene Bruun, who want to actually volunteer to take the elderly on pedal cab rides around the town for free, and they get captured under our ordinance, which would require them to be licensed and have certain equipment and pay fees to do something that is a purely a public service. So the purpose of this ordinance is to modify the definition of pedal cab to apply only to the commercial operators we'd intended to capture in the first place and not to purely voluntary operators such as the group we're speaking with now. That's all it does.

President Slifka: Thank you Mr. Alair. Are there any questions for Mr. Alair? Okay. Would you mind just checking the sign-up sheet as you go back to the audience? Thank you. Okay. Lene, did you want to say anything about it? Since you were referenced? Well, it might help. You were the person who's the catalyst, so it probably would help my colleagues to know who don't already know...

Ms. Bruun: Yes. Good evening everybody.

President Slifka: ...what the object is.

Ms. Bruun: Thank you.

President Slifka: And just state your name and address for the record please.

Ms. Bruun: I'm Lene Bruun. My address is 201 Stoner Drive, West Hartford. Sorry for my incomplete English. I'm from Denmark, so I hope you'll bear with me on that one.

Cycling Without Age is a Danish program. It was started three years ago in Denmark by a man, a guy called Ole Kassow, and it's a nonprofit, volunteer-driven organization, and the main purpose or the basic idea of it is that volunteers—and we call them pilots—they offer free rickshaw rides, and a rickshaw is a three-wheeled tricycle, to elderly residents in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, elderly who experienced limited mobility in order to increase their mobility, to get them outside, to give them wind in their hair, to give them a chance to re-integrate into the society they used to take active part of, and also to socialize with the pilots and to socialize with the people they meet along the way, and the model of Cycling Without Age is the right to get wind in your hair. And the—in Denmark by now around 400 of these rickshaws where you have the passengers, you can have—fit two passengers in the seat in front of you, which gives the resident an unobstructed view of what we are passing, and it also makes it possible for the pilot to have a conversation going with the passengers since many elderly people, they are hearing impaired, so if you have them seated behind you, they can't hear or talk. You can't have a conversation going. But when you have them in front of you, you can have a conversation going. And very shortly the experience from Denmark is that the elderly, they totally love it. Around 400 of these rickshaws are now placed on nursing homes around Denmark, and around 2000, 2050 people volunteer some of their spare time to give rides to these elderly. The program is spreading rapidly to Norway and Sweden, Switzerland. First rickshaw came to Singapore one-and-a-half month ago, and West Hartford will be the second place in the States to start this program, so it's quite unique, and next week the founder, Ole Kassow, and his cofounder, Dorthe Pedersen, will visit West Hartford for two days, Wednesday and Thursday next week, and they'll be launching events and some of you have already received invitations, but the Slow Roll Bike Ride in the afternoon on the 26th and the following fundraising event in front of Kingswood Oxford School is for everybody, so I hope some of you, all of you can find time to join some of it. Thank you. Any questions?

President Slifka: Are there any questions? Go ahead, Ms. Hall.

Councilor Hall: I realize this is outside of the question of the ordinance, but just out of curiosity as we're always thinking about public safety as well, where—can you give us any background on in these other places where it's in place, what the safety records are with people who've used this. I know we just finished adopting our Complete Streets...

Ms. Bruun: Yeah, yeah.

Councilor Hall: ...policy and just kind of thinking how does it fit in with all of that?

Ms. Bruun: We have safety as one of our main concerns, and when planning the routes we look at where it's safe to ride. I ride my bike a lot around West Hartford and I find as long as I stay off the busy streets, it's actually quite bike friendly to ride here. But I'm also an experienced cyclist, so that of course makes a difference when compared to an unexperienced cyclist. In Denmark, the infrastructure for cycling and in some of the other European countries are quite different than here where you have protected bike lanes, so

that makes the safety issues less prominent. But here we have of course been looking at the map. I have a map of West Hartford on my dining table at home, and we are planning the route in order to avoid the busy streets and to get into the quiet parts and the reservoir, and I find there are lots of beautiful places here that we can take the elderly that I'm sure they'll love to go to, yes. And they'll be of course be seated with a seatbelt and wear bike helmets, and the pilot will wear a neon yellow vest, and all that stuff is taken into consideration.

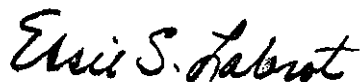
President Slifka: Thank you. Are there any other questions? Okay, thank you, Lene.

Ms. Bruun: Thank you.

President Slifka: I dare say that any of us would not do nearly as good a job if we tried to speak at a public hearing in Denmark, so it's...
So that conclude—

Ms. Bruun: Have a good meeting.

President Slifka: That concludes the sign-up sheet. Was there anybody else who did not sign up wish to speak to the subject matter of this hearing? Okay, then I'll just read in for the record a letter dated August 11, 2015, from CRCOG finding no apparent conflict with regional plans and policies or the concerns of neighboring towns, and if there's nothing further from my colleagues, then we will close this Public Hearing.



Essie S. Labrot
Town Clerk/Council Clerk
/jw